



EPISCOPAL NEWS SERVICE

The Episcopal Church Center ▪ 815 Second Avenue, New York, NY 10017
(212) 922-5385 ▪ (800) 334-7626 ▪ FAX (212) 557-5827 ▪ Quest Inboxes: ENS/JAMES SOLHEIM/JAMES THRALL

Office of News and Information

JAMES E. SOLHEIM, DIRECTOR

JAMES H. THRALL, DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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CONTENTS	PAGE
■ NEWS DIGEST	1
■ Lutherans approve full communion with Reformed but not with Episcopal Church--yet (97-1959)	6
■ Transition begins as Griswold meets with staff in New York (97-1960)	9
■ Alaska consecrates youngest bishop in the Episcopal Church (97-1961)	11
■ In preparation for African assembly, World Council shapes new vision for the future (97-1962)	13
■ Michael Barwell appointed deputy director of news and information (97-1963)	15
NEWSBRIEFS (97-1964)	17
NEWSFEATURES	
Episcopalians and Lutherans seek new direction in path towards full communion (97-1965)	22
Episcopal Churches help thousands mourn Princess Diana, Mother Teresa (97-1966)	26

**Presiding Bishop's statement on Israeli/Palestinian peace process
(97-1967) 28**

A love letter to the Episcopal Church (97-1968) 29

**Tickets available for installation of 25th presiding bishop
(97-1762) 31**

REVIEWS AND RESOURCES (97-1766) 32



news digest

97-1959D

Lutherans approve full communion with Reformed but not with Episcopal Church--yet

(ENS) Facing ecumenical decisions of momentous significance, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) approved "full communion" with three Reformed churches--but voted down a similar proposal with the Episcopal Church by only six votes.

In the closing hours of the assembly, however, the Lutherans sent a strong signal that they fully intend to deal with the issue again in 1999. By margins over 90 percent, they passed two resolutions that said the ELCA "remains committed to the ultimate goal of full communion" with the Episcopal Church and asked for intensive study in the next two years "to communicate the history, theology and ecclesiology" of both churches.

Addressing the Episcopalian representatives after the vote, ELCA Bishop George H. Anderson said, "You felt the urgent and heartfelt intent of this church to enter into full communion with the Episcopal Church. We ask for time to set ourselves in order and to find ways to join you in what you have already committed yourselves to--and to which we aspire."

"The ecumenical opportunity of the century has been lost," said Prof. J. Robert Wright of New York's General Seminary, a principal author of the Concordat. "This was a chance to bridge the great divide in Christianity between the Reform and Catholic traditions."

In his statement, Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning pointed out that the Episcopal Church had "overwhelmingly" approved the Concordat at its General Convention in the same convention center a month earlier. "An opportunity was created--and I regret that we have missed it." Although he will encourage that the present relationship continue, he admitted that "a certain diminishment of enthusiasm will be inevitable as we pray that God will show each of us the way forward."

"The ecumenical agenda is very much alive," added the Rev. David Perry, the Episcopal Church's ecumenical officer, because the votes demonstrated "broad-based support in both churches." The enthusiasm demonstrated for the Concordat at the General Convention is a clear sign that "the energy will continue."

While the vote may be "an honest and accurate reflection of where the Lutheran church is," Anderson agreed that it is clear that the majority of Lutherans want a close relationship with the Episcopalians. "With some additional work, we can complete the task."

Presiding bishop-elect Frank Griswold told a reporter that the ELCA may need "to grow

in cohesion a little more" before it could respond to the proposal for full communion. And he added that "there would be a reluctance to offer a new invitation without evidence that the Lutherans would respond positively." In the meantime, "Nothing is going to dampen my enthusiasm for full communion," he said.

97-1960D

Transition begins as Griswold meets with staff in New York

(ENS) The era of new leadership for the Episcopal Church has begun. In a series of recent meetings at the Episcopal Church Center in New York, Presiding Bishop-elect Frank T. Griswold III of Chicago joined a meeting of the whole staff and met to appoint members of interim bodies.

"He is an extremely gifted person and has used these gifts in a wonderful way for this church," Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning said in welcoming what he called "fresh leadership." He cited Griswold's strong ecumenical and interfaith work and his significant leadership in "helping the House of Bishops to claim its identity. He's on the side of the angels," he said.

In welcoming the "continuity," Griswold said that "many of Browning's concerns and perspectives are my own" but added that there will be some obvious "differences in style."

Griswold told the staff that they would enter a "season of transition" before the direction would be clear. "I don't see myself as a revolutionary," he said, "but I do see myself as an agent of change." Citing his experience in Chicago, he expressed the hope that he and his staff would "live in a way that is transparent and accessible" so that they could be of service to the community.

His first priority, he told the staff, is the appointment of a chief operating officer, authorized by the 1997 General Convention in Philadelphia. In a later interview, he said that a job description is being written and a search committee will be appointed in coming weeks. He announced that Bishop Claude Payne of Texas had agreed to chair the committee.

Promising a "broad search," Griswold said that the job description would be circulated in all dioceses and that candidates would be sought among laity and clergy. The most important attributes for the position, he said, would be someone who is good at details, understands the systems, and works collaboratively. He said that he hoped that he and Pamela Chinnis, president of the House of Deputies, would have three names before the Executive Council meeting in February.

After several intense working sessions with Chinnis and Browning, Griswold said that they had completed their work on appointments to committees and commissions. "The choices were complex because of changes made at the General Convention in church structure." He said that they were "confident that we have honored the diversity which is our church" but admitted that "no process is perfect."

97-1961D

Alaska consecrates youngest bishop in the Episcopal Church

(ENS) In a sweeping liturgy that blended a wide variety of historic influences on the church's largest diocese over the last century, Alaska consecrated Mark MacDonald as its seventh bishop. At 43 he is the youngest bishop in the Episcopal Church.

The September 13 consecration at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks drew heavily on Native American elements--not all of them from Alaska. The Gospel was read in English and then the two official Native languages, Inupiaq and Gwich'in. The preacher was Steve Darden, a Navajo from Flagstaff, a friend from the time when MacDonald served in Navajoland. Much of MacDonald's ministry has been spent serving among Native Americans in Oregon, Navajoland and Minnesota. While some of his own ancestors were Native American, MacDonald does not claim any tribal affiliation.

At a banquet following the consecration service, MacDonald heard many words of advice--and a few warnings. Bishop James Jelinek of Minnesota urged the new bishop and the diocese to "keep the relationship healthy" and not lay too many expectations on their new leader. "Mark will walk into every moment trying to be faithful to God--and you won't like that all the time," he said. The Navajos warned the diocese to treat MacDonald well or they would reclaim him.

It may be part of the "honeymoon" most new bishops enjoy, but people in the diocese are sensing a new infusion of hope and energy. The Rev. Luis Uzueta, who said that he enjoys playing guitar with the new bishop, said that after 18 months in transition, "Mark brings encouragement and hope to the staff--and to the diocese." Like his predecessor Steve Charleston, who resigned for family reasons, "he has a strong sense of direction and has special gifts of discernment, especially on multicultural issues. He is very spiritual but with a common touch and people open up to that."

97-1962D

In preparation for African assembly, World Council shapes new vision for the future

(ENS) The central committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC) approved a new policy statement at its September meeting in Geneva that will serve as a blueprint and a charter for its ecumenical commitment in the 21st century--and tried to deal with continuing criticisms from the Orthodox.

After extensive and occasionally contentious debate, preceded by eight years of development, the committee adopted a final report, "Towards a Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC" (CUV). The report now goes to the Eighth Assembly in Harare, Zimbabwe, in December of 1998.

The debate about CUV has exposed some deep-seated differences about the nature and the future of the WCC. While not departing from the WCC's persistent areas of concern for church unity, mission and service, the report focuses on the council's essential identity as a

"fellowship of churches" and one element in a network of ecumenical partners that includes many churches and groups which are not among the 330 members of the WCC.

The report drew criticism from some members, however, who expressed a growing discomfort with the WCC's wide variety of programs that often have little direct involvement by member churches. WCC general secretary Konrad Raiser said that the proposals would "change the style of work of the staff who need to become more responsive to member churches and to the [their] ecumenical witness."

In his address to the committee as its moderator, Catholicos Aram I of the Armenian Orthodox Church warned that the WCC was "increasingly threatened by institutional paralysis." He said that the council was identified "too much with structures and programs" and could lose "much of its creative dynamism and vision."

While praising the WCC's success in helping churches "build bridges across geographical, ideological, racial and cultural divisions," especially during the Cold War, he reminded the council that some members have complained about a Western agenda sometimes imposed by Western European and North American churches." That has not changed in the 50 years since the WCC was formed, even though today almost two-thirds of the member churches are from the southern hemisphere. "The fact is not due so much to Protestant intention to dominate the council, but rather to Orthodox reluctance to become fully involved in the total life and work of the council and to identify with it."

97-1963D

Michael Barwell appointed deputy director of news and information

(ENS) Michael Barwell, who has been director of communications and editor of the newspaper in the Diocese of Southern Ohio for 11 years, has been appointed deputy director of news and information for the Episcopal Church, effective September 22.

"In so many ways it is a very logical choice because Mike has worked closely with the Episcopal News Service since it took shape in 1989," said James Solheim, director of news and information. "He helped set the style and direction of ENS and headed the ENS teams at the General Conventions in Phoenix, Indianapolis and Philadelphia. He brings internationally recognized skills and experience to the church--as well as continuity at this crucial time of transition at the Episcopal Church Center."

A graduate of Gordon College in Massachusetts, Barwell worked for newspapers in New York, Ohio, Michigan and Massachusetts and joined the staff in the diocese in the fall of 1986.

Barwell said that he looked forward to his news position as a way to express and extend his national and international interests. In announcing his resignation to the diocese, Bishop Herbert Thompson, Jr., called attention to Barwell's "superb job of communication and education" and his work in expanding the diocese's "relationship with local, state and national news media." And he said that he "helped us all to know much more about the needs and wants of people in our midst, as well as throughout the world."

"Everything I have done up until this point, in my career in the secular world and the

church, has led me to this ministry," Barwell said. "It is an exciting time in the life of the church and I look forward eagerly to the challenges." Barwell succeeds Jim Thrall, who has entered the doctoral program at Duke University.

97-1959

Lutherans approve full communion with Reformed but not with Episcopal Church--yet

by James Solheim

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In the closing hours of the assembly, however, the Lutherans sent a strong signal that they fully intend to deal with the issue again in 1999. By margins over 90 percent, they passed two resolutions that said the ELCA "remains committed to the ultimate goal of full communion" with the Episcopal Church and asked for intensive study in the next two years "to communicate the history, theology and ecclesiology" of both churches.

Addressing the Episcopalian representatives after the vote, ELCA Bishop George H. Anderson said, "You felt the urgent and heartfelt intent of this church to enter into full communion with the Episcopal Church. We ask for time to set ourselves in order and to find ways to join you in what you have already committed yourselves to--and to which we aspire."

A lost opportunity?

After days of presentations, open hearings and floor debate, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly vote in Philadelphia on August 18 approved the new relationship with the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Reformed Church in America and the United Church of Christ by over 81 percent. The vote on the Concordat of Agreement with the Episcopal Church was 66.1 percent, just shy of the required two-thirds, 684 in favor and 351 opposed. While the implications of the split decision sank in, the assembly participants sang a listless version of "The Church's One Foundation," as participants embraced each other in tears of joy or frustration.

"The ecumenical opportunity of the century has been lost," said Prof. J. Robert Wright of New York's General Seminary, a principal author of the Concordat. "This was a chance to bridge the great divide in Christianity between the Reform and Catholic traditions."

In his statement, Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning pointed out that the Episcopal Church had "overwhelmingly" approved the Concordat at its General Convention in the same convention center a month earlier. "An opportunity was created--and I regret that we have missed it." Although he will encourage that the present relationship continue, he admitted that "a certain diminishment of enthusiasm will be inevitable as we pray that God will show each of us the way forward."

Bishop Ted Jones of Indianapolis, co-chair of the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee, said during a press conference that "those close to the talks will be disappointed" but that "life will go on in the local churches." He warned against viewing the vote as "an ecumenical dead end."

Anderson said that he was "shocked at this narrowest of margins." In his opening address he had declared his support for both ecumenical proposals.

Historic episcopate draws strong reaction

Throughout the discussion and debate one provision of the Concordat drew the strongest opposition--a changed role for Lutheran bishops and their incorporation into historic episcopate.

Lutherans regard their ordained ministry as a single order which includes both pastors and bishops. Bishops are elected for six-year terms of oversight and then may return to the parish. Under the Concordat, they would be elected for life, even though they may continue to serve terms, and they would be "installed" by three bishops from each of the churches.

Speaker after speaker pointed out that the Augsburg Confession, the authoritative 16th century document of the Lutheran Reformation, says that agreement in Word and Sacrament is the only condition for unity. "The requirement of the Concordat is that we adopt the hierarchical system of episcopal structure as an additional condition for full communion, thus adding a condition for unity which we have never had before," argued Prof. Michael Rogness of the Luther Seminary in St. Paul.

While admitting that "Lutherans don't think the historic episcopate is necessary for ordained ministry," Prof. Walter Bouman of Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus argued that "the Lutheran confessions state that Lutherans have no objection to the historic episcopate." For the sake of unity and mission, therefore, Lutherans would agree to share the historic episcopate with Episcopalians who would, in turn, suspend temporarily the requirement that only clergy ordained by bishops in the historic episcopate could preside at the Eucharist. That would permit Episcopalians to recognize Lutheran clergy immediately. "The episcopate is not a limitation but an expression of our freedom," he said.

Passionate objections

Dozens of Lutherans swarmed to microphones to passionately argue for and against the Concordat. Some were absolutely convinced that bishops in the historic episcopate would create a gulf between them and the rest of the church by moving toward a more hierarchical style by adopting the three-fold ministry of the Episcopal Church. "Every fiber of my being shouts out and cries no to the historic episcopate," said Connie McAllister of St. Paul. But John Stendahl of Massachusetts said that he liked the "subversive potential" of the Concordat and saw in the agreement possibilities for "mutual critique and admonition." Others openly warned that the issue was too divisive, asking if it was worth dividing the church over the issue.

Several speakers pointed out that the whole Christian world was watching whether the Lutherans would see the importance of healing divisions that have persisted since the 16th century.

Bishop George Mocko said that his synod in Delaware-Maryland had been opposed but that he had changed his mind because a failure to adopt the proposals would jeopardize other ecumenical discussions, leading those partners to think Lutherans were all talk and no action.

"Lutherans are free to accept the historic episcopate, not as necessary, but as a gesture of reconciliation," said Bishop Donald McCoid of Pennsylvania. But his colleague, Bishop Rick Foss of North Dakota, said that it would be dishonest to say yes out of a sense of fear or politeness. Don Maier of Montana said that he was afraid of the deep divisions, arguing that the whole process was flawed. "This may be the time, but this is not the way."

Picking up the pieces

The Reformed observers expressed mixed emotions at a press conference following the vote. The Rev. John Thomas of the UCC said that he felt a "deep sense of disappointment" that it was not possible for both proposals to move forward. He said that his gratitude was mixed with grief and that he shared the hurt and pain among his Episcopal colleagues.

The ELCA had hoped to "move in multiple directions at the same time," said the Rev. Dan Martenson, ecumenical officer for the ELCA in the news conference following the vote. He worried that the decision in favor of the Reformed churches would now be perceived as moving in one direction. Yet he said that the ELCA is deeply resolved to continue its relationships with other churches both here and abroad.

"The ecumenical agenda is very much alive," added the Rev. David Perry, the Episcopal Church's ecumenical officer, because the votes demonstrated "broad-based support in both churches." The enthusiasm demonstrated for the Concordat at the General Convention is a clear sign that "the energy will continue." And he was particularly encouraged by the "solid core of younger people committed to ecumenism." July's meeting of almost 30,000 Lutheran youth strongly endorsed the ecumenical proposals.

While the vote may be "an honest and accurate reflection of where the Lutheran church is," Anderson agreed that it is clear that the majority of Lutherans want a close relationship with the Episcopalians. "With some additional work, we can complete the task."

Jilted at the altar?

That task seems daunting for some Episcopalians who feel that, despite an enthusiastic embrace of the Concordat, they have been left standing at the altar. "It is a sad day for the ecumenical movement," Prof. William Franklin of General Seminary said in a newspaper interview. "The Episcopal Church has never done anything like this before--certainly not by such an overwhelming vote. We got jilted."

Presiding bishop-elect Frank Griswold told a reporter that the ELCA may need "to grow in cohesion a little more" before it could respond to the proposal for full communion. And he added that "there would be a reluctance to offer a new invitation without evidence that the Lutherans would respond positively." In the meantime, "Nothing is going to dampen my enthusiasm for full communion," he said.

The determination of the Lutherans to study the issue and respond in 1999 means that the Episcopal Church would be able to consider a response at the General Convention in 2000. In the meantime, the 1982 agreement on eucharistic sharing "continues to guide joint ministry efforts in worship, education and mission."

Anderson's hopeful comments about the future resonated with Browning's statement that "the unity in Christ which has always existed, and which awaits our acceptance, will be re-established whenever God's people want it and claim it."

--James Solheim is director of news and information for the Episcopal Church.

97-1960

Transition begins as Griswold meets with staff in New York

by James Solheim and Michael Barwell

(ENS) The era of new leadership for the Episcopal Church has begun. In a series of recent meetings at the Episcopal Church Center in New York, Presiding Bishop-elect Frank T. Griswold III of Chicago joined a meeting of the whole staff and met to appoint members of interim bodies.

Griswold was welcomed to the Church Center by Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning who is finishing his 12-year term. "I'm going to call him at midnight on December 31 and tell him, 'Frank, baby, it's all yours,'" Browning said with a chuckle in his introduction of Griswold to the assembled staff during an In House meeting on September 22.

"He is an extremely gifted person and has used these gifts in a wonderful way for this church," Browning said in welcoming what he called "fresh leadership." He cited Griswold's strong ecumenical and interfaith work and his significant leadership in "helping the House of Bishops to claim its identity. He's on the side of the angels," he said.

In welcoming the "continuity," Griswold said that "many of Browning's concerns and perspectives are my own" but added that there will be some obvious "differences in style."

Season of transition

Griswold told the staff that they would enter a "season of transition" before the direction would be clear. "I don't see myself as a revolutionary," he said, "but I do see myself as an agent of change."

Citing his experience in Chicago, he expressed the hope that he and his staff would "live in a way that is transparent and accessible" so that they could be of service to the community.

With frequent flashes of humor, Griswold characterized his leadership style as one of "collaborative listening." As a "pastor of systems," he said that he delegates authority and trusts his staff, while demanding accountability. "I can live with ambiguity but I like decision-making," he said. "It's important to keep in mind that ours is a ministry of service."

Admitting that there are "destroying angels at work in our church," Griswold said that the task is to "name them and try to convert these angels of hostility and mistrust" with transparent openness. "If we are going to talk about reconciliation, then we must live that way."

Broad search for chief operating officer

His first priority, he told the staff, is the appointment of a chief operating officer, authorized by the 1997 General Convention in Philadelphia. In a later interview, he said that a job description is being written and a search committee will be appointed in coming weeks. He announced that Bishop Claude Payne of Texas had agreed to chair the committee.

Promising a "broad search," Griswold said that the job description would be circulated in all dioceses and that candidates would be sought among laity and clergy. The

most important attributes for the position, he said, would be someone who is good at details, understands the systems, and works collaboratively. He said that he hoped that he and Pamela Chinnis, president of the House of Deputies, would have three names before the Executive Council meeting in February.

Shortly after his election as the 25th presiding bishop, Griswold announced that the Rev. Canon Carlson Gerdau, canon to the ordinary in Chicago since 1987, will serve as his personal assistant. Gerdau will begin his duties by February 1, he said.

Interim bodies appointed

After several intense working sessions with Chinnis and Browning, Griswold said that they had completed their work on appointments to committees and commissions. "The choices were complex because of changes made at the General Convention in church structure." He said that they were "confident that we have honored the diversity which is our church" but admitted that "no process is perfect."

While plans for his installation at the Washington National Cathedral on January 10 are still in the early stages, he did express some of his hopes for the service. "The liturgy will reflect the real diversity that is integral to our Anglican identity," he said in an interview. It will emphasize that "the welfare of the church depends on everyone." He added that his homily will draw on his recent experiences at an international conference in Assisi which discussed the spirituality of children, especially their role as agents of renewal. He said that he was amazed at the "innate religious sensitivities" of children and their "unique understanding of the Eucharist." He said that he would draw on the sacrament of baptism as the source of community in the church.

(Tickets will be available, the transition team has announced, on a first- come, first-served basis with no reserved seating at the cathedral. There will be a limit of two tickets per request which should be sent by mail to the Rev. Preston Kelsey at the Episcopal Church Center.)

A wonderful irony

The Griswolds will move to New York after the installation "so that we can spend Christmas in Chicago." He added that he was trying to keep his perspective on the change in roles, "making sure to take personal time for retreat and prayer."

"It is very important that I finish my term as bishop of Chicago." In the meantime, he expressed gratitude for the "seasoned vision" of staff members in New York during this time of transition.

In what Griswold described as a "wonderful irony," Browning had previously scheduled a visit the Diocese of Chicago in November--his last visit to a diocese during his episcopacy. When that visit was scheduled, Griswold noted, "we never anticipated that we would both be in transition."

—James Solheim is director of news and information for the Episcopal Church and Michael Barwell is the deputy director.

97-1961

Alaska consecrates youngest bishop in the Episcopal Church

by James Solheim

(ENS) In a sweeping liturgy that blended a wide variety of historic influences on the church's largest diocese over the last century, Alaska consecrated Mark MacDonald as its seventh bishop. At 43 he is the youngest bishop in the Episcopal Church.

The September 13 consecration at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks drew heavily on Native American elements--not all of them from Alaska. Bishop Steven Plummer of Navajoland and Bishop William Wantland, a Seminole from Eau Claire, participated, with clergy from throughout the huge diocese and the nation.

The Gospel was read in English and then the two official Native languages, Inupiaq and Gwich'in. The preacher was Steve Darden, a Navajo from Flagstaff, a friend from the time when MacDonald served in Navajoland. Much of MacDonald's ministry has been spent serving among Native Americans in Oregon, Navajoland and Minnesota. While some of his own ancestors were likely Native American, MacDonald does not claim any tribal affiliation.

During interviews with the local press, MacDonald has been asked about his pony tail, even though they are fairly common in Alaska. Owanah Anderson, the church's officer for Native American Ministry who was in Alaska for the consecration, said that "Mark is probably the first bishop since the 18th century with a pony tail."

Words of welcome and advice

At a banquet following the consecration service, MacDonald heard many words of advice--and a few warnings. Bishop James Jelinek of Minnesota urged the new bishop and the diocese to "keep the relationship healthy" and not lay too many expectations on their new leader. "Mark will walk into every moment trying to be faithful to God--and you won't like that all the time," he said. The Navajos warned the diocese to treat MacDonald well or they would reclaim him.

Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning, the chief consecrator, called attention to the presence of all three of Alaska's Roman Catholic bishops, calling that "a good sign." While contending that the history of the diocese "would stand up to any in the church," he warned that "greatness doesn't come without some pain and suffering but also great opportunities."

Cultural tensions are part of the reality of the diocese, which is split roughly in half with concentrations of Native parishes in the north, along the Yukon River and in the Arctic, and predominantly white parishes in the south. Half of the diocesan budget of \$700,000 goes to support the ministry in the north.

With more than 1400 miles from the southernmost parish to Point Barrow in the north, it is a diocese the size of a continent. For years church members have been talking about the need to split Alaska into two dioceses--if nothing else to keep from killing their bishop. It was apparent from conversation during the consecration that the age of the new bishop is regarded as a strong asset.

"Take care of yourself and then you can take care of the diocese, and the diocese can

take care of you," Browning concluded. In response, MacDonald thanked the presiding bishop for his support and said, "When the history of Indian ministry is written it will say things about you it has never said about anyone."

Over several hours participants offered gifts and comments. A colleague from Minnesota warned the diocese to be prepared for strong leadership--and deep compassion. Hannah Solomon, an 87-year-old matriarch from Fort Yukon, who has known all six previous bishops, presented a beaded stole and a few choice words of wisdom. And Tom Stillday, chief spiritual leader of the Red Lake Ojibwa in Minnesota and first Native American chaplain in the Minnesota Legislature, shared his own personal testimony and said that MacDonald had helped him see how both of them work for God. As a sign of respect, the tribe sent Stillday to participate in the consecration.

A new beginning

As the Rev. David Elsensohn of Sitka said in welcoming guests to the banquet, "It is a new beginning for all of us." He sees the young new bishop as the leader that "will help the diocese of Alaska become a new people together." Rector of St. Peter's by the Sea, Sitka, Elsensohn said that he foresees a continuation in the vein charted by Bishop Charleston, "an exciting path for us to follow."

It may be part of the "honeymoon" most new bishops enjoy, but people in the diocese are sensing a new infusion of hope and energy.

The Rev. Luis Uzueta, who said that he enjoys playing guitar with the new bishop, said that after 18 months in transition, "Mark brings encouragement and hope to the staff--and to the diocese." Like his predecessor Steve Charleston, who resigned for family reasons, "he has a strong sense of direction and has special gifts of discernment, especially on multicultural issues. He is very spiritual but with a common touch and people open up to that." Uzueta describes a gentle humility about MacDonald "that puts people at ease."

The diocese continues to struggle with financial problems and that has affected morale. "Everyone knows that Mark has been called to do a difficult job but he has gifts that we have been waiting for," Uzueta said. "He has a very solid spiritual core and he brings a fresh sense of hope."

Uzueta is encouraged that MacDonald's leadership will rejuvenate the long-range planning discussions.

On his first Sunday visitation, MacDonald went to a historic parish, St. Mark's in Nenana, which has a "long list of heroes who changed Alaska." With a gentle sense of humor and light touch, he reached out to the packed church and shared with them the Gospel. And then he helped baptize a child--whose name was Destiny.

--James Solheim is director of News and Information for the Episcopal Church.

97-1962

In preparation for African assembly, World Council shapes new vision for the future

by James Solheim

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After extensive and occasionally contentious debate, preceded by eight years of development, the committee adopted a final report, "Towards a Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC" (CUV). The report now goes to the Eighth Assembly in Harare, Zimbabwe, in December of 1998. "I sensed strong support for the statement," said Pamela Chinnis, president of the House of Deputies who represented Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning at the last two meetings.

The debate about CUV has exposed some deep-seated differences about the nature and the future of the WCC. While not departing from the WCC's persistent areas of concern for church unity, mission and service, the report focuses on the council's essential identity as a "fellowship of churches" and one element in a network of ecumenical partners that includes many churches and groups which are not among the 330 members of the WCC. The report is an effort to provide the members of the widely diverse organization with a clear declaration of their areas of agreement and draw from them commitment to a bold new vision of the council's role in the ecumenical future.

The CUV draws on a vision that "the WCC itself is not the only ecumenical or the only world expression of the fellowship of churches, but is also at the service of the one ecumenical movement that transcends itself."

The report drew criticism from some members, however, who expressed a growing discomfort with the WCC's wide variety of programs that often have little direct involvement by member churches. WCC general secretary Konrad Raiser said that the proposals would "change the style of work of the staff who need to become more responsive to member churches and to the [their] ecumenical witness."

A fellowship of risks and hopes

In his address to the committee as its moderator, Catholicos Aram I of the Armenian Orthodox Church warned that the WCC was "increasingly threatened by institutional paralysis." He said that the council was identified "too much with structures and programs" and could lose "much of its creative dynamism and vision."

While praising the WCC's success in helping churches "build bridges across geographical, ideological, racial and cultural divisions," especially during the Cold War, he reminded the council that some members have complained about a Western agenda sometimes imposed by Western European and North American churches. "That has not changed in the 50 years since the WCC was formed, even though today almost two-thirds of the member churches are from the southern hemisphere. "The fact is not due so much to

Protestant intention to dominate the council, but rather to Orthodox reluctance to become fully involved in the total life and work of the council and to identify with it."

The WCC "must be reshaped in order to provide more space to Orthodox participation and interaction," Aram said. He pointed out that, in many corners of the Orthodox world, ecumenism is regarded as heresy. The recent withdrawal of the Georgian Orthodox Church from WCC membership is regarded by some observers as a warning of possible further defections. He called upon member churches to "recommit ourselves to a fellowship of risks and hopes."

Raiser will visit Russia early next year to try resolve difficulties with the WCC's largest member church, the Russian Orthodox Church.

The central committee approved a series of recommendations to restructure the WCC which could lead to significant changes in its program activities and a smaller and more flexible staff that would work in closer cooperation with member churches.

Harare Assembly on course

Central committee members were assured that, despite two changes in the dates for the assembly in Harare, plans are proceeding. Densen Mafinyani, general secretary of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, said that the churches throughout Africa "are waiting to receive you with warm hands and hearts." The assembly theme, "Turn to God--Rejoice in Hope," will undergird the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the WCC which will begin in September in Amsterdam where the WCC was formed in 1948 and culminate in the assembly and a "recommitment" ceremony.

"We would begin in one of the old cities of Europe and end in a young nation in Africa," Raiser said.

"As we get closer to the assembly, it holds greater excitement as a gathering of Christians who will look at the issues--and celebrate the fact that we have been together 50 years," said the Rev. David Perry, the Episcopal Church's ecumenical officer. He said that he likes the symbolism of holding the assembly on the African continent to show that "the WCC is not a captive of Western and European churches."

The Episcopal Church's delegation, according to Perry, will be "a wonderful balance of word and deed--expressing our commitment to peace and justice issues but also a sign that we take the theological issues of faith and order very seriously." He added that Episcopalians can join the celebration of the WCC anniversary because "we were present at the creation."

Sexuality a minefield?

It is not clear yet how the assembly will deal with potentially explosive issues. Some member churches have already warned that sexuality issues could seriously disrupt the assembly.

Perry said that the WCC has been trying to deal with substantial differences in the way member churches reach decisions. "There is strong resistance to a legislative process with debates and votes," he said.

Chinnis said that an ad hoc committee, including Anglicans from southern Africa, is working on a way of dealing with sexuality issues.

While agreeing that sexuality issues could be a "minefield" at the assembly, Raiser

said in an interview before the central committee meeting that he would call a private meeting of 25 people to discuss issues connected with sexual orientation and strategies for dealing with them. "The issue is on our doorstep," he said, adding that member churches are wrestling with the issues. But he contended that the WCC would not be a good place to formulate a position on the matter because "the genius of the WCC is to open up and maintain a space" for churches of different traditions to live together and be challenged mutually on issues...." He said that he hoped the consultation would be able to find a way to turn the "explosive nature" of the debate into a positive contribution at the assembly.

—James Solheim is director of news and information for the Episcopal Church.

97-1963

Michael Barwell appointed deputy director of news and information

(ENS) Michael Barwell, who has been director of communications and editor of the newspaper in the Diocese of Southern Ohio for 11 years, has been appointed deputy director of news and information for the Episcopal Church, effective September 22.

"In so many ways it is a very logical choice because Mike has worked closely with the Episcopal News Service since it took shape in 1989," said James Solheim, director of news and information. "He helped set the style and direction of ENS and headed the ENS teams at the General Conventions in Phoenix, Indianapolis and Philadelphia. He brings internationally recognized skills and experience to the church—as well as continuity at this crucial time of transition at the Episcopal Church Center."

A graduate of Gordon College in Massachusetts, Barwell worked for newspapers in New York, Ohio, Michigan and Massachusetts and joined the staff in the diocese in the fall of 1986.

A familiar byline on the international scene, Barwell served as a member of the communications team at the Lambeth Conference of the world's Anglican bishops in 1988 and will lead the news team at the Lambeth Conference in 1998. He has traveled on assignment to Russia, England, Wales, Nigeria, Egypt, Cyprus and the Bahamas.

One of his major responsibilities in the diocese was editing *Interchange*, the award-winning diocesan newspaper. It received the award of General Excellence as the top newspaper in 1996 from Episcopal Communicators as well as a number of awards from the Associated Church Press (ACP). He has served on the boards of both the Episcopal Communicators and the ACP.

Barwell said that he looked forward to his news position as a way to express and extend his national and international interests. In announcing his resignation to the diocese, Bishop Herbert Thompson, Jr., called attention to Barwell's "superb job of communication

and education" and his work in expanding the diocese's "relationship with local, state and national news media." And he said that he "helped us all to know much more about the needs and wants of people in our midst, as well as throughout the world."

"Everything I have done up until this point, in my career in the secular world and the church, has led me to this ministry," Barwell said. "It is an exciting time in the life of the church and I look forward eagerly to the challenges."

Barwell succeeds Jim Thrall, who has entered the doctoral program at Duke University.



news briefs

97-1964

As Moscow celebrates 850 years, the church takes pride of place

(ENI) Massive celebrations of the 850th anniversary of the foundation of Moscow in early September served to remind the Russian people of the close links between Russian culture and the Orthodox faith. At all the main celebrations, Patriarch Alexy II, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, appeared alongside Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Moscow's mayor Yuri Luzhkov. The church's Moscow Patriarchate marked the 850th anniversary as an official religious holiday, and special services were celebrated in all the city's churches. But even at the main celebrations—including a concert in Red Square, a high-tech laser show by French performer Jean-Michel Jarre and the closing ceremony at the Luzhniki Stadium—Orthodox Christian emblems and symbols dominated, stressing the inseparability of Russian patriotism and the Orthodox Christian tradition. On September 3, Alexy, Yeltsin and Luzhkov officially inaugurated the grounds surrounding the newly reconstructed Christ the Saviour Cathedral, which now dominates central Moscow. The exterior of the cathedral, crowned with five onion-shaped golden domes, is now almost finished. The original cathedral was blown up in 1931 on Stalin's orders. Alexy began the church's celebration of the anniversary on September 6, with a liturgy in the Kremlin's Cathedral of Dormition. The service was dedicated to Metropolitan Peter, the saint who in the 14th century transferred the see of Russian Orthodoxy to Moscow from the city of Vladimir, thus ensuring Moscow's key role in the history of Russia.

Palestinian politicians 'sound alarm' for Christians in Holy Land

(ENI) A top-level delegation of Palestinian Christian politicians recently told journalists that the Christian community in the Holy Land could disappear in the next few years. The politicians sharply criticized the government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and said they wanted churches and church organizations to pressure Israel to respect the timetable for the Middle East peace process which is due to be completed before the end of the century. They also promised that Palestinians, in particular Palestinian Christians, would assume a much higher international profile in their quest for peace and for land. Afif Safieh, Palestinian ambassador to the United Kingdom and the Holy See, along with Bethlehem's mayor, Hanna Nasser, and two members of the Legislative Council of the Palestinian National Authority, met leading officials of the World Council of Churches and other church organizations in Geneva to press their case. "Today you have many more Christian Palestinians in Chile than you have Christian Palestinians in Palestine," Safieh told journalists at the Ecumenical Center in Geneva. "In Sydney, Australia, you have many more

Christians from Jerusalem than you have Christians in Jerusalem. That is the very tragic situation of the Christian community."

Cardinal warns churches not to adopt German church model

(ENI) A German cardinal recently accused the Roman Catholic Church in his country of putting institutional interests above spiritual concerns. The cardinal said that in East Germany the church's work had been easier under communism than it was under capitalism in the democratic west. "The German church is more an institution than a Holy Spirit--it's like a car which has too weak an engine and too large a body," Cardinal Joachim Meisner of Cologne said. "Unless we can build a stronger engine, we will have to trim its body if we are to reach the heavenly Jerusalem. It isn't important what we get there in--a great Mercedes or a humble Volkswagen." Meisner, who said his church was being forced by lack of funds to close certain institutions, advised Roman Catholic communities in Eastern Europe not to "make the German mistake" of "building more in the institutional sphere than the divine." Meisner's comments come at a time of soul-searching within Germany's mainstream churches--both Roman Catholic and Protestant--as they face financial pressures caused by their nation's economic problems following German unification in 1990.

Canadian bishops want to eliminate gambling

(ENS) The Anglican, Lutheran and Roman Catholic bishops in southern Alberta recently distributed a letter urging members to take action to eliminate gambling in that province. "We must not sit back and let the world for which Jesus died self-destruct through excessive individualism, indifference to others, greed and selfishness," said the letter, which was signed by Anglican Archbishop Barry Curtis, Roman Catholic Bishop Paul O'Byrne and Bishop Stephen Kristenson of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. "Governments are less motivated to enact just tax legislation and policy that accrue to the benefit of all, when people voluntarily contribute millions to a secondary taxation system that tends to draw from those least able to contribute," they said. "'Winning the lottery' has become our money-oriented society's new definition of hope."

Anglican Church accuses S. Africa of aiding oppression by arms sales

(ENI) South Africa's Anglican leaders have rebuked President Nelson Mandela's government for selling weapons on the international market and for buying military equipment with money which, the church leaders say, is badly needed to alleviate poverty and to pay for social services like health and education. The rebuke was made in a memorandum presented by Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa to Professor Kader Asmal, the chairman of the National Conventional Arms Control Committee. In the memorandum, the church expressed astonishment that after the apartheid struggle the South African government was willing to sell arms enabling foreign leaders to suppress human rights. Asmal's committee was set up to oversee and control the country's arms trade, and ensure it was conducted responsibly with respect for human rights. The statement was made soon after South Africa's Defense Minister, Joe Modise, visited Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to promote sales of G6 artillery pieces and anti-aircraft guns from South Africa valued at \$1.5 billion. Last year a \$600

million deal to sell tank-firing control systems to Syria was cancelled after international pressure.

Pressure continues for U.S. to act against religious persecution

(ENI) Republican leaders of the U.S. Congress have promised to vote later this year for a bill designed to compel the Clinton administration to take stronger action against religious persecution overseas. The bill--called the Freedom from Religious Persecution Act--was introduced to Congress in May by Representative Frank R. Wolf (R), a Presbyterian from Virginia, and Senator Arlen Specter (R), a Jew from Pennsylvania. The bill, if approved, would allow the establishment of a White House Office of Religious Persecution Monitoring, a step Clinton refused to take last year. The office would be responsible for determining when governments were inflicting religious persecution or ignoring persecution within their countries. The office would be expected to direct immediate attention to religious communities and countries cited in three previous congressional resolutions: Christians, Tibetan Buddhists and Bahai's in China, Cuba, Egypt, Indonesia, Laos, Morocco, North Korea, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Vietnam.

EMM becomes part of Presiding Bishop's Fund

(ENS) Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM) recently became part of the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief in a move designed to "enrich both EMM and the ministry of the fund," according to Bishop Charlie McNutt, chief operating officer of the Episcopal Church Center. In a written announcement, McNutt said that "re-establishing the ties between the fund and refugee ministry will enable EMM to move forward with recent General Convention resolutions directing EMM to develop an advocacy agenda for refugees, disenfranchised immigrants and asylum seekers." According to EMM director Richard Parkins, the arrangement provides EMM "access to the larger church and thus a constituency which can join with us in speaking on behalf of refugees and immigrants at a time when advocacy for our most vulnerable sisters and brothers is urgently needed." The fund originated out of the needs of refugees in Europe created by World War II. Over the years, as the Fund's mission expanded to include emergency relief and development grants, certain refugee and immigration assistance efforts of the church were lodged in a specialized program area called EMM.

Two Orthodox leaders to meet for first time since Estonia dispute

(ENI) The two most important leaders of Orthodox Christianity--Patriarch Bartholomeos I, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, and Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow, are to meet late in September in Odessa, Ukraine, for the first time since a conflict erupted in 1995 between their two churches over church jurisdiction of Orthodox parishes in Estonia. The meeting was announced recently by the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church. Some progress is expected in the near future over the question of jurisdiction in Estonia. The controversy was partly defused by a compromise allowing parishes to choose between the patriarchates. Relations between the two patriarchs became further complicated by failed attempts in June this year to set up a meeting between them in Austria. Bartholomeos cancelled his visit to Austria following reports that Pope John Paul II

would travel to Austria to meet Alexy. However, the projected meeting between the Pope and Alexy subsequently failed to take place because of differences between Rome and Moscow.

Leading church officer decides to resign in sexual orientation debate

(ENI) A prominent Australian church minister, Dr. Dorothy McRae-McMahon, who revealed in July that she is a lesbian, recently resigned as national director for mission for the Uniting Church in Australia after strong criticism from conservative parishes and church groups. McRae-McMahon said she was resigning because her presence in the senior position might distract the church from its real work. "As a marginalized person, I'm not prepared to jeopardize work for other marginalized people by holding to my position," she said. In an open letter released after the church's National Standing Committee accepted her resignation on September 1, she said that she would never resign her ordination, because "it is of God . . . I also cannot fall from my genuine conviction that I am standing on the prophetic ground of the Gospel of Jesus Christ," she added. The controversy over ordination of homosexuals in the Uniting Church intensified with the withdrawal of funds by the church's biggest parish. A group of evangelical and charismatic members of the church has also called for the resignation of homosexual clergy and for the redirection of financial support away from the church's ruling body. The conservative Wesley Mission, the Sydney parish that has withdrawn funding from the church, said in a statement that the call for resignations also was directed at people who did not adhere to the biblical principles of celibacy for single people and fidelity in marriage. The Uniting Church is Australia's second-largest Protestant church.

Southern Africa's Anglicans plan Angolan diocese by year 2000

(ENI) The Anglican Church of the Province of Southern Africa (CPSA) is planning to expand its regional work by establishing a new diocese in war-torn Angola by the turn of the century. A pilgrimage by CPSA bishops, planned for mid-1999, will formalize the creation of the 24th diocese of the CPSA, a church spokesperson said recently. The pilgrimage will signal the completion of work which began in 1995 when the CPSA synod adopted a resolution to create a missionary diocese in Angola. Bishop Dinis Sengulane of Lebombo in Mozambique has overseen work in Angola since 1995, a CPSA statement said. In a report on the work in that country, he said that creating the new diocese was both a challenge and a privilege. Noting the devastation caused by the war, the bishop said: "God cannot be smiling as he looks at what human beings have done to one another and to his creation: graves, ruins, carcasses, traumas and handicaps caused by the war. But we thank God that we can restore his smile in Angola for the Angolans."

WCC announces change of date for eighth assembly

(WCC) The World Council of Churches (WCC) recently changed the date of its eighth assembly to December 3-14 at the University of Zimbabwe, Harare. In a letter to member churches, WCC general secretary Konrad Raiser explained that the WCC was informed on May 29 by the vice-chancellor of the University of Zimbabwe that the university would not be available for the assembly in September, 1988, as had been originally planned. Raiser said he was aware the change of dates may cause difficulties, but said, "We can only

ask for your understanding for this decision which we regret and which was caused by circumstances beyond the control of the WCC."

Raiser responds to Georgian Orthodox church withdrawal from WCC

(WCC) Following the decision of the holy synod of the Georgian Orthodox Church to leave the World Council of Churches (WCC), Dr. Konrad Raiser, WCC general secretary, recently wrote to his Holiness Elia II, Catholicos Patriarch of all Georgia. Raiser said the decision is "a very serious development but it does not represent an exceptional situation. Similar conflicts have arisen in many other churches representing the whole spectrum of Christian traditions." He said that the WCC considers such differences as "an almost natural consequence of the fact that the ecumenical movement raises questions and poses challenges for the churches." On May 22, Elia informed Raiser by letter of the synod's decision, explaining that a "negative attitude towards the ecumenical movement" had grown up in the Georgian Orthodox Church and threatened to divide it. Raiser said that the WCC sincerely regrets "that in some situations--and the Georgian Orthodox Church may not constitute an exception--legitimate differences of assessment regarding the ecumenical movement are being so linked with other internal conflicts that the impression is created as if the ecumenical movement was a cause of division in the church."

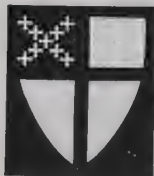
People

Carlson Gerdau, canon to the ordinary of the Diocese of Chicago, was named assistant to Presiding Bishop-elect Frank Griswold. Griswold announced his decision in a letter to clergy and lay leaders of the Diocese of Chicago on July 31. Gerdau has been canon to the ordinary and director of deployment, ministry development and communications in Chicago since Griswold succeeded Bishop James Montgomery as diocesan in September 1987. He was born in New York and graduated from Harvard University in 1955. At the national level, he has served on the Church Deployment Board, the Joint Standing Committee for Planning and Arrangements for General Convention, and the Standing Commission on the Church in Small Communities. At the General Convention last July, he was elected a trustee of the Church Pension Fund.

David Harvin, a Houston attorney, is the new chair of the board of trustees of the Episcopal Seminary of the Southwest. He is the first lay person to chair the trustees in the seminary's 45-year history. He joined the seminary board of trustees in 1996 and served on its long-range planning committee.

Fred Osborn, director of development programs for the Episcopal Church Foundation, recently resigned from his position to serve as development director for the New York State regional office of the Nature Conservancy. Osborn was with the foundation for 11 years.

Ann Gordon retired from her position as executive director of the National Association of Episcopal Schools on September 1. She served in that post for 14 years.



news features

97-1965

Episcopalians and Lutherans seek new direction in path towards full communion

by James Solheim

(ENS) In the wake of the decision by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) not to establish "full communion" with the Episcopal Church, leaders of both churches are searching for a new path toward the historic new relationship--and trying to determine how to deal with the underlying issues.

At its General Convention in July, the Episcopal Church agreed to take steps toward full communion by an overwhelmingly majority. Meeting a month later in the same convention center in Philadelphia, the ELCA failed by only six votes to endorse the move. At the same time it voted by more than 80 percent to establish full communion with three churches of the Reformed tradition.

Even those who strongly opposed the Concordat of Agreement took little joy in the decision since more than 66 percent (684 to 351) of voting members to the ELCA's Churchwide Assembly voted in favor. In its closing hours, the assembly passed two resolutions by margins over 90 percent committing itself to vote again in 1999 after a period of mutual study.

An editorial in the Kansas City Star chided Lutherans for their decision. In a piece called "Counterpoint: Lutherans have some explaining to do," the paper described the background for the ecumenical decisions and then concluded, "The unity movement has been dealt a heavy blow. And it will be left especially to Lutheran opponents to explain why continued division makes more sense than finding common ground."

Historic episcopate an issue

Opposition among the Lutherans centered around issues of ministry, especially the role of bishops and the inclusion of Lutheran bishops in the historic episcopate. A statement adopted by the faculty of the Lutheran Seminary in Philadelphia, which had endorsed both the Concordat and the Formula of Agreement with the Reformed, said, "We confess that we took too much for granted that we all had a common understanding of the historic Lutheran conviction in favor of an episcopal order.... As a result, we failed to engage seriously enough with Lutherans who believed that adopting the historic episcopate as described in the Concordat would have endangered the balance of authorities within the ELCA or called into

question the authenticity of some current and past Lutheran denominational structures."

While both Episcopalians and Lutherans have bishops, for Lutherans they have not been an essential part of the tradition in this country. "Some American Lutherans, such as Norwegians settled in the Upper Midwest, bear the marks of having fled from oppressive bishops in Norway in the last century," noted the Rev. Charles Austin, a Lutheran pastor from New Jersey who is also a columnist. "They have deep-seated fears of hierarchy, and those old fears were expressed often in the six hours of debate on the proposal during the Philadelphia meeting." He said that "Lutherans were not willing to accept some ambiguity and move ahead," realizing that it would be "necessary to give up old prejudices and fears."

Others are arguing that most of the opposition is geographically based. Bishop Kenneth Olsen of the ELCA's Metro Chicago Synod said, "I have never seen, among the bishops, as much sorrow, anger and outward emotional response as I did after the Concordat was defeated. It was obvious," the bishop contended, "that the primary opponents were from the Upper Midwest synods and leadership of groups centered around Luther Seminary [in St. Paul] and its faculty."

Willful distortions

In a lively on-line Internet meeting devoted to discussion of the Concordat, Lutheran participants expressed embarrassment and anger at the rejection. Some said it was not so much a commentary on the Episcopal Church as it was a failure of vision in the ELCA. "It was a Lutheran vs. Lutheran thing," a pastor from Massachusetts said, "a piece of unfinished business from the merger 10 years ago" that formed the ELCA from three predecessor churches.

Lutherans have also expressed shock and dismay at what they perceive as willful distortion of the Episcopal Church, describing it as "outright slander." One pastor said, "Where calumny and distortion were freely spread, where suspicion and contempt were encouraged and indeed used for political gain, there we are not merely speaking of honest difference of opinions."

Midge Roof of Indianapolis, president of the Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical Officers and one of the resource people at the ELCA meeting, said that she didn't recognize the Episcopal Church in some of the hearings and discussions. "In the debates and hearings, it seemed clear to me that our church was being misrepresented, even traduced. Anti-Concordat literature was distributed daily."

Roof was stunned by some of the rumors and willful distortions at the ELCA meeting. She heard, among other things, that women pastors would not be accepted by Episcopalians. Someone even asked her why Lutherans would want to be in full communion and let the Queen of England appoint their bishops--and why Lutherans would want to surrender the right to choose their own parish pastors. She was told that the ELCA was a democratic church, not a hierarchical one.

A Lutheran bishop said that delegates told him that Episcopalians don't believe in the priesthood of all believers and that laity would no longer be allowed to assist with communion--and that the real goal of the Concordat is creation of a "super church."

A way forward?

In early reaction, however, the path towards a positive response from the Lutherans is not clear. Some argue for a whole new document, which would mean another consideration by the Episcopalians. Others want a commentary, to clear up lingering misperceptions in the Concordat. Many argue that the two churches just don't know each other--or themselves--well enough. As one Lutheran pastor said, "How can we engage in ecumenical dialogue when we don't know what we are?" He said that it is important that the churches learn to deal with each other realistically at the local level and asked, "Can we do that before we move to round two? I don't want to go through the humiliation and embarrassment again."

Shortly after the vote, Bishop H. George Anderson of the ELCA said that, while Lutherans explored ways to live into full communion with the Reformed churches, "the situation with the Episcopal Church is both more urgent and less settled." He said that he was eager to meet with Presiding Bishop-elect Frank Griswold because "it is crucial to see what possibilities he is willing to entertain as we proceed to develop the revised text called for in the ELCA assembly action." He said that he hopes to have a text ready to share with the ELCA synod meetings next spring "and I have set December 1 as the deadline for deciding on a process and a timeline."

Griswold told the New York Times that the ELCA may need "to grow in cohesion a little more" before responding to the proposal for full communion. While stressing that "nothing is going to dampen my enthusiasm for full communion," he said that "there would be a reluctance to offer a new invitation without evidence that the Lutherans would respond positively."

Stronger bonds with patience

The statement by the Lutheran Seminary faculty said that a decision in 1999 by the ELCA on the Concordat would be helped by "greater clarity in the text itself, by a stronger summary of the doctrines of the faith in which our 28-year dialogue has demonstrated our unity, and by a simplified commentary on the Concordat or any revised text of agreement that may facilitate further conversations and ecumenical understanding between the Episcopalians and Lutherans."

In a "Love Letter to the Episcopal Church," the Rev. Richard Jeske, Lutheran co-chair of the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee that prepared the final draft of the Concordat, said, "We love you because you are the ones who are making us look at our own heritage and are asking us to rediscover who we always have been and are" despite what he described as "family squabbles." *[full text in Newsfeatures section.]*

Asking for patience while the ELCA sorted out its ecumenical theology, Jeske said that he is convinced that "our bonds will be all the stronger for this interim, our mutual love will rest on even firmer foundation, and our readiness for mutual ministry will be affirmed."

Meanwhile cooperation continues

Lutherans and Episcopalians on the local level seem determined to move ahead with cooperation, although some projected ministries won't be possible in the absence of interchangeable clergy. As Bishop Edward Jones of Indianapolis said at the press conference after the Lutherans voted, "Life will go on in the local churches" despite the disappointment.

Lutheran and Episcopal bishops in Virginia issued a joint pastoral letter to their clergy and congregations, expressing disappointment and pledging to continue to develop closer relationships.

"While we are disappointed at this delay in our journey together, our commitment is clear. We are determined to strengthen our joint witness and live more deeply our unity in Christ," the September 22 letter said. It also called on "those persons and parishes who have entered into covenants and joint ventures to continue their work."

Lutheran and Episcopal bishops in New Jersey, who are developing a joint camp and conference center, expressed a similar determination. "We have missed a wonderful opportunity to step out boldly," said Bishop Jack McKelvey of Newark, "but this will not stand in the way of our doing joint ministry on a diocesan level or a local level over the next several years." But the Rev. Lucinda Laird, an Episcopal rector in Teaneck who cooperates with a local Lutheran parish, said that she couldn't help wonder "what increased cooperation could have happened if the Concordat had passed."

Building on relationships

Across the country others expressed uncertainty on how to encourage local cooperation. Small Lutheran and Episcopal parishes in Kentucky, for example, can't be served by clergy under provisions of the 1982 Interim Eucharistic Sharing agreement between the two churches, nor is it possible to begin joint congregations. Small Lutheran parishes in the Louisville area expressed hopes that the Episcopal diocese could help them. "The vote of the ELCA has hurt the mission of the church in Kentucky and will continue to hurt our mission," said the Rev. Bob Franklin, assistant to the Lutheran bishop.

Yet the two churches have built a substantial reservoir of cooperation and good will. "In the months ahead I hope that we in the Episcopal Church will continue to build on the very positive relationships that exist all over our two churches," the Rev. David Perry, the Episcopal Church's ecumenical officer in a letter to the church's bishops, said. After reminding them that the 1982 agreement "remains in place," he added, "Now more than ever, we can take the opportunities to worship and work together, to deepen our knowledge of one another, as a means to the unity we seek."

--James Solheim is director of news and information for the Episcopal Church.

97-1966

Episcopal Churches help thousands mourn Princess Diana, Mother Teresa

By Michael Barwell

From Central Park to Salt Lake City, from cathedrals to small mission churches, Episcopal churches helped thousands mourn the death of Princess Diana in early September.

"Thank you for making this available," mourners told the staff of Christ Church Cathedral in Lexington, Kentucky. "She suffered many of the same kinds of things my friends and I have suffered . . . I needed to pay my respects and I wanted my children to have something to remember."

In the weeks following the sudden death of Princess Diana, who died with two others in an automobile accident in Paris on August 30, diocesan, cathedral and parish staff members around the country scrambled to accommodate requests to respond to the tragedy, which became a media-driven, worldwide period of intense mourning.

In Chicago, Presiding Bishop-elect Frank Griswold said in a homily to the 700 mourners jammed into St. James' Cathedral, "Diana was courageous and fearful; intensely private and shockingly self-disclosing; self-serving and self-giving; she was in so many ways a mirror of our own humanity writ large, complete with all its paradoxes and contradictions, all its struggles to find meaning in life and to find love, which is perhaps why so many thought of her as 'one of us.'"

Responding to many needs

Initially, many congregations planned only a few words or prayers on the Sunday following her death. As the week wore on, and televised reports from England and around the world showed thousands of mourners leaving flowers and tributes, many Episcopal churches offered opportunities for local residents to respond.

"We were just delighted" with the response, a spokesperson for the British consul general said in Chicago. "It answered so many needs for so many people," she said in a newspaper interview.

In New York, the Diocese of New York and the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine moved their planned memorial service from the cathedral to the North Meadow of Central Park to accommodate the large numbers of people expected to attend.

Elsewhere, hundreds of Denver-area residents crossed a flower-strewn vestibule at St. John's Cathedral to attend a service organized by the Daughters of the British Empire. Joining Mayor Wellington Webb and his wife, Wilma, people of East Indian descent, Hispanics, and other nationalities listened to Dean Charles Kiblinger's sermon, signed condolence books, and wept as a bagpiper played "Amazing Grace."

The same story was played out in St. Matthew's Cathedral in Dallas, Texas, where 600 mourners joined British expatriates. "I thought we were the only ones who felt it," said one English-born woman in a newspaper interview. "It really, really helped us. People told

us . . . 'we share your loss.'"

A beam of light

Cadets from The Citadel, the military college of South Carolina, served as acolytes in a service at the Cathedral of St. Luke and St. Paul in Charleston. Members of civic organizations and other denominations participated in the ecumenical service in which Bishop Edward Salmon, Jr. presided.

At historic Truro Church in Fairfax, Virginia, members of The British Club said they were "grateful [for] this chance to come together to share our great sorrow both with each other and with the American public."

While some commentators expressed scorn for the unusual outpouring of grief, and questioned turning Diana into "an earthly saint," Episcopal clergy such as the Rev. Caryl Marsh of St. Paul's in Salt Lake City, Utah, noted in their sermons or homilies that Diana "was a beam of light in a world that in so many ways is in darkness, a symbol of compassion in a world in which it is sadly lacking."

Mother Teresa also mourned

Many churches combined their memorial services to include Mother Teresa, the Roman Catholic nun who founded a world-wide religious order dedicated to serving the poor, outcasts, and dying in Calcutta.

The 87-year-old, Nobel Prize-winning nun died five days after Diana of heart failure. Many homilists compared the two lives -- one glamorous and troubled, the other simple and self-giving.

"In Mother Teresa deep and compelling spirituality was combined with a practical application of faith," said Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey. "I am sure that these were the qualities that drew Princess Diana and others to hold her in such affection."

Tributes to the tiny nun poured out of religious offices around the world.

"In a world where the gap between rich and poor continues to increase, where millions are denied basic human rights and justice is a stranger to entire nations, the world will honor the memory of Mother Teresa best by its commitment to eradicate the greed and exploitation which creates, for the majority of the world's people, so much suffering of body, mind and soul," said Dr. Konrad Raiser, general secretary of the World Council of Churches in Geneva.

"Her gentleness and strength, her gifts of endurance and loving service become models of hope and promise for all who pursue the journey of faithful service," said Dr. Joan Campbell, general secretary of the National Council of Churches in New York. "We praise God for Mother Teresa, a saint for our time."

The Rev. Canon John L. Peterson, secretary of the Anglican Communion, said from his offices in London, "Her ardent faith and her deep compassion are something that will be remembered for generations to come. Her greatest gift to us is not only the admonition to work for the poor, but to love the poor, the outcast."

"In a hurting world, where enormous problems make it hard not to lose heart, Mother Teresa encouraged us by giving vibrant witness that one person can make a difference," said Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning. "We never had any doubt that her

loving labor among those ignored, and even despised, was an obedient response to her Lord. May her faithful witness inspire our own."

—Michael Barwell is deputy director of news and information for the Episcopal Church.

97-1967

Presiding Bishops' statement on Israeli/Palestinian peace process

I continue to be outraged and heartbroken at acts of terrorism against innocent Israelis committed by extremists opposed to the peace process between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. And I commend President Clinton for his decision to move ahead with Secretary Albright's visit to the region as planned for September 9. The peace process cannot be held captive to violence. And I commend Yasser Arafat for his swift condemnation of this latest atrocity.

I also encourage efforts being made by the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli government, assisted by the United States, to identify those responsible for these heinous crimes. The perpetrators need to be apprehended, charged and prosecuted. Cooperative strategies are the best hope to succeed in stamping out this scourge. Unilateral action by Israel in pursuit of suspects within territory controlled by the Palestinian Authority will only further exacerbate the problem.

Great responsibility rests with President Arafat in combatting terrorism from the Palestinian side and I urge him to make concrete advances in this effort and to make his words clear in action by putting an end to terrorism against the Israeli people. In doing so, it is morally improper to demand that President Arafat not pursue dialogue and reconciliation with his Palestinian adversaries. While fighting terrorism, his efforts to build consensus for peace among all Palestinian constituencies should be encouraged.

The struggle against terrorism must be pursued vigorously, but the continuation of the peace process must move forward in tandem with these efforts as well. If the peace process continues to be suspended pending apprehension of all terrorists, then the terrorists get what they want. They must not be given any satisfaction or encouragement that their tactics are working.

There is also much that Prime Minister Netanyahu can do to reverse the hopelessness that gives rise to the violence. First, the closure of Israel and East Jerusalem to Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank, the restricted movement within the territories and the imposition of sanctions is a form of collective punishment which is intolerable. It punishes the innocent by robbing them of their employment, denying them access to medical and cultural institutions, preventing their conduct of legitimate business and pursuing worship in their places of choice. Collective punishment is an injustice that enrages the general population and gives fuel to those who would advocate violence. Innocent Palestinians no

more deserve such punishment than Israeli citizens deserve being targets of terrorists.

Second, the Israeli government must confront its policy of settlement expansion in the territories and impose a permanent suspension, including in East Jerusalem, and must desist from destroying Palestinian homes. Settlement expansion and destruction of homes undermine the efforts to curb terrorism and instead become a pretext for further violence.

Suspension of these actions, coupled with the opening of the airport and seaport in Gaza and free passage between Gaza and the West Bank would do much to isolate the terrorists and prepare the climate for final status negotiations on the remaining issues, including the resolution of Jerusalem as the capital of two sovereign states.

The role of the United States is crucial and neither side will be able to move forward without the U.S. fulfilling its obligations as a sponsor of the peace process. Both sides are under enormous pressure from some of their own constituencies to scuttle the quest for peace. I urge Secretary Albright to call for courage and vision from their leadership and, if necessary, to apply diplomatic and economic pressure to achieve compliance with the Oslo accords.

My prayers are with Secretary Albright, Prime Minister Netanyahu, President Arafat and all Palestinians and Israelis in the critical days ahead.

Edmond L. Browning
Presiding Bishop and Primate
Episcopal Church of the United States

97-1968

Commentary

The following comment was written by the Rev. Richard Jeske, Lutheran co-chair of the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee, following a vote by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America rejecting the Concordat of Agreement that would have established full communion.

A Love Letter to the Episcopal Church

We Love you. That is the first thing which must be said, spoken even in the midst of pain and sorrow, when things just didn't go, as they should have gone. We love you.

We love you because you happened to be there when we had one of those family squabbles, those rounds of clan upheaval which can often make the closest of kin act in the most inelegant of ways. It's like bringing your betrothed home to meet the family, but one faction came to the party already knowing they weren't going to like him. But with time--you've seen it happen before--he could eventually even become their favorite.

The decision of 66.1 percent of the ELCA delegates to join with you in full communion fell just six votes short of the required number to make it official. We are embarrassed,

chagrined, hurt, and in a time of deep pain. However, that clear majority also speaks a message of faith and hope and love to us and, we trust, to you as well.

We love you because you embraced and welcomed and invited us to join with you in mission and ministry. Some of our family, however, came with scars deeply etched in their historic consciousness, wounds which by your action you are seeking to heal.

We love you because you are the ones who are making us look at our own heritage and are asking us to rediscover who we always have been and are. Don't stop doing that. We had to rediscover things which we in America have lost, which other members of the Lutheran family elsewhere in the world enjoy and treasure. Yes, we had the Scriptures, as do all other Christians, yes we had sacraments and creeds, as do most other Christians. But we shared with you in the Protestant tradition something which not all other Protestants cared about, a witness to the continuity of the church throughout the ages, the historic ministry of bishop, priest and deacon.

You helped us rediscover that our confessional writings treasure that historic shape of ministry. You agreed with us that it was not necessary for salvation, or for the validity of the church, or even for faithfulness to the gospel, to maintain that historic shape of ministry. Yet you helped us see that it was an important ingredient for mission and witness in a culture which has little use for history, which holds up the self as the measure of all things but which in its quiet, more introspective moments hungers and thirsts for encounter with incarnational continuity in space and time.

You were the ones who asked us to rediscover in our heritage that which you treasure as a gift of God--episcopacy. It was an old issue which still needed healing and you are the agent by which healing will take place. Unfortunately, you have caught the flak from some who didn't like the prescription. Do not fear, however, that your invitation to healing has fallen on deaf ears. Two-thirds of us have spoken, and the story is not yet over.

We love you, and because of that love we are bold enough to ask you to be patient with us. In the providence of God your conventions are triennial and ours biennial. So we voted by a 98 percent margin to commit ourselves for the next two years to a process of education and rediscovery, and to aspire in 1999 to make that embrace which so narrowly eluded us this time, and to begin our journey together officially in full communion.

In this interim period we ask you to pray for us. Our bonds will be all the stronger for this interim, our mutual love will rest on even firmer foundation, and our readiness for mutual ministry will be affirmed on a much wider basis than could have been achieved at the present time.

Remember, we love you, and we thank you for your ministry of healing and partnership with us, steep and uneven as the road at times may seem. For all your gifts which you have shared and for those which will be shared in the future, to God all praise and glory.

--Richard L. Jeske

97-1969

Tickets available for installation of 25th presiding bishop

Tickets are available for the installation of Bishop Frank T. Griswold III of Chicago as the Episcopal Church's 25th presiding bishop on Saturday, January 10, 1998 at 11 a.m. The service will be held at Washington National Cathedral in Washington, DC.

About 2500 tickets will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis with a limit of two tickets per request. Requests for tickets should be sent by US Mail to: Installation Service, c/o the Rev. Preston Kelsey, 815 Second Avenue, New York, NY 10017. Please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope with your request. There will be no reserved seating.

Hotel information will be sent with each request but each person will be responsible for making reservations.

(Applications for press credentials should be sent to the Office of News and Information at the Episcopal Church Center.)



reviews and resources

97-1970

National conference focuses on death penalty

(ENS) In partnership with numerous religious and activist groups, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) has organized "Envisioning a World Without Violence," a campaign to awaken the religious community to the immorality of the death penalty and to impassion people of faith to work for its abolition. From November 13-16, a diverse group of religious leaders and lay people will gather in Washington, D.C., for a national conference focusing on the death penalty from a religious perspective. According to an announcement from AFSC, the goal of the gathering is to "empower individuals by providing them with essential resources so they may return to their religious communities as more effective advocates against the death penalty." Featured speakers include Sister Helen Prejean, author of *Dead Man Walking*, the Rev. Bernice King, author of *Hard Questions, Heart Answers*, and Millard Fuller, co-founder of Habitat for Humanity International. For more information, call Pat Clark (215-241-7130) or Kurt Rosenberg (215-241-7124) at AFSC.

Small Church gathering at Sewanee announced

(ENS) The Center for Ministry in Small Churches will sponsor the Annual Gathering on November 9-11 at the DuBose Conference Center in Monteagle, Tennessee. The Rev. Dr. Tex Sample, professor of church and society at St. Paul School of Theology, Kansas City, Missouri, is the keynote speaker. Sample is the author of "Ministry in an Oral Culture: Living with Will Rogers, Uncle Remus and Minnie Pearl." Among the workshops offered at this year's gathering are music resources for small churches, conflict and small churches, godly play in small churches, and youth ministry. To register, or for more information, call 800-722-1974.

Online mailing list for the discussion of church music available

(ENS) Church music is the topic for a new internet mailing list called "churchmusic-1". The list has a practical/pastoral focus for people who plan music for the rites of the church. The Revised Common Lectionary with denominational variations will be used as a guide for discussions. Choral music exchange, software for music ministry, and distribution of new church music also will be discussed. Churchmusic-1 is unmoderated and free. Its scope is global and ecumenical. To subscribe, send mail to: majordomo@churchoffice.com and in the body of your message write only the following:

subscribe churchmusic-1 your@e-mail.address

or point your browser to

www.churchoffice.com/mlists.html

and follow the links from "Church Music" to the subscription form.

Photographs available in this issue of ENS:

1. Episcopalians respond to failure of concordat (97-1959)*
2. Presiding bishop gives General Convention medallions (97-1960)*
3. Members of interim bodies selected (97-1960)*
4. Griswold meets staff in New York as first step in transition (97-1960)*
5. Alaska consecrates Mark MacDonald as its seventh bishop (97-1961)*
6. Bishop Mark MacDonald's first parish visit includes a baptism (97-1961)*
7. Alaska consecrates Mark MacDonald as its seventh bishop (97-1961)*
8. New bishop of Alaska celebrates first Eucharist (97-1961)*
9. Bishop Mark MacDonald of Alaska receives signs of his office (97-1961)*
10. Episcopalians join in mourning Princess Diana (97-1966)*
11. Flowers offered to memory of Princess Diana (97-1966)*

* This photo is available in color.

The Episcopal News Service is available electronically. QUEST users can join the "Episcopal News Service" meeting to receive full versions of all stories or join "ENS Digest" to receive the digest versions of our news stories. Web users can visit the official Episcopal Church website at www.ecusa.anglican.org.

